

Thomas Jefferson to James Monroe, May 26, 1795, The Works of Thomas Jefferson in Twelve Volumes. Federal Edition. Collected and Edited by Paul Leicester Ford.

TO JAMES MONROE J. MSS.

Monticello May 26, 1795.

Dear Sir, —I have received your favor of Sep. 7th from Paris, which gave us the only news we have had from you since your arrival there. On my part it would be difficult to say why this is the first time I have written to you. Revising the case myself I am sensible it has proceeded from that sort of procrastination which so often takes place when no circumstance fixes a business to a particular time. I have never thought it possible through the whole time that I should be ten days longer without writing to you & thus more than a year has run off.

I am too much withdrawn from the scene of politics to give you anything in that line worth your notice. The servile copyist of Mr. Pitt, thought he too must have his alarms, his insurrections and plots against the Constitution. Hence the incredible fact that the freedom of association, of conversation, & of the press, should in the 5th year of our government have been attacked under the form of a denunciation of the democratic societies, a measure which even England, as boldly as she is advancing to the establishment of an absolute monarchy has not yet been bold enough to attempt. Hence too the example of employing military force for civil purposes, when it has been impossible to produce a single fact of insurrection unless that term be entirely confounded with occasional riots, & when the ordinary process of law had been resisted indeed in a few special cases but by no means generally, nor had its effect been duly tried. But it answered the favorite purposes of strengthening government and increasing public debt; & therefore an insurrection was

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announced & proclaimed & armed against, but could never be found. & all this under the sanction of a

name which has done too much good not to be sufficient to cover harm also. & what is equally astonishing is that by the pomp of reports, proclamations, armies &c. the mind of the legislature itself was so fascinated as never to have asked where, when, & by whom this insurrection has been produced? The original of this scene in another country was calculated to excite the indignation of those whom it could not impose on: the mimicry of it here is too humiliating to excite any feeling but shame. Our comfort is that the public sense is coming right on the general principles of republicanism & that its success in France puts it out of danger here. We are still uninformed what is Mr. Jay's treaty: but we see that the British piracies have multiplied upon us lately more than ever. They had at one time been suspended. We will quit the subject for our own business.

The valuation by Mr. Lewis & Mr. Divers which had been set on foot before your departure, took place Sep. 19, 1794. It was £173. currency & exchange being then at 40. per cent, it was equivalent to £123-11-5 sterling. On the 19th of Nov. I drew on James Maury for £37-10 sterling in favor of Wm. B. Giles, & shall now immediately draw for the balance. Mr. Madison & myself examined your different situations for a house. We did not think it admitted any sort of question but that that on the east side of the road, in the wood, was the best. There is a valley not far from it to the southwest & on the western side of the road which would be a fine situation for an orchard. Mr. Jones having purchased in Loudon we shall hardly see him here, & indeed have hardly seen him. If I can get proper orders from him I will have the ground above mentioned planted in fruit trees from my own nursery, where I have made an extra provision on your account. Indeed I

wish you would determine to save 500. or 1000£ a year from your present salary, which you ought to do as a compensation for your time, & send us a plan of the house & let us be building it, drawing on you for a fixed sum annually till it be done. I would undertake to employ people in the most economical way, to superintend them & the work & have

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the place in a comfortable state for your reception. If you think proper to authorize me to do this I shall begin immediately on receiving your permission. I am so confident that you ought to do it & will do it that I have ventured to send a small claim or two to you as explained in the two inclosed letters to LaMotte & Froulle, with an expectation that you will give me an opportunity of replacing it here to those who shall be employed for you. Should you however not conclude to let us do anything for you here, I would wish you to suppress both these letters. While speaking of Froullé, Libraire, au quai des Augustins, I can assure you that after having run a severe gauntlet under the Paris book-sellers I rested at last on this old gentleman, whom I found in a long & intimate course of after dealings to be one of the most conscientiously honest men I ever had dealings with. I commend him to you strongly, should you purchase books. I think LaMotte at Havre a very good & friendly man, & wish your forming more than an official intimacy with him. Should you have occasion for wines from Burgundy, apply to Monsr. Parent Connelie à Beaume, who will furnish you with the genuine wines you may call for, & at honest prices. I found him indeed very faithful in a long course of employment. He can particularly send you of the best crops of Meursalt & Cotte d'or.

For fine Champagne non mousseux, apply to Monsr. Dorsai, or to his homme-d'affaires Monsr. Louis if still in place at his Chateau at Aij near Epernay in Champagne. While recommending good subjects to you I must ask you to see for me the following persons, present my affectionate remembrance to them and let me hear how they have weathered the storm. These are L'Abbe Ammon, place Vendome, chez M Daville, an excellent mentor and much affectioned to the Americans. Monsr. la Vieillard of Passy whom Dr. Franklin presented to me as the honestest man in France, & a very honest & friendly one I found him. Monsr. & Madame Grand at Passy vastly good & friendly people also. Dr. Gem an old English physician in the Faubourg St. Germain, who practiced only for his friends & would take nothing, one of the most sensible & worthy men I have ever known. But I reckon he has gone to England. Many others I could name of great worth but they would be too many, & have perhaps changed their scene. If Mr. Balbatre the musical preceptor of my

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daughters of the Faubourg St. Honore or its neighborhood can be found, be so good as to deliver him the affectionate compliments of my family, & if he can send them anything new & good in the musical line, I will ask you to pay him for it & let it be packed with the books from Froulle. These, if they come at all, must come before the winter, as a winter pasage is inevitable ruin to books. I have bought for Mr. Short the land between yours & Blenheim 1334 acres @ 23/6 ready money. Three out of seven shares (of 50 as each) of Carter's land over the mountain will be for sale soon. It is not known where these lands will lie as the partition is not yet made. Should anyone join you on the mountain it would be worth your pur-

-chase. Colle is lately sold for £375. to a Mr. Catlet, a farmer, whom I do not know. It is very possible it will be for sale again. Should you conclude to build a house, you must decide whether of brick or stone. The latter costs about one-half of the former, to wit about 8/ a perch of 25 cubic feet. I hope Mr. Jones will change the system of corn & wheat alternately on your land till the fields are entirely worn out, abandoned, & the new ones treated in the same manner. This is the way my lands have been ruined. Yours are yet in a saveable state. But a very little time will put some of them beyond recovery. The best plan would be to divide the open grounds into 5. fields, and tend them in this order. 1. wheat. 2. corn & potatoes. 3. rye. 4. clover. 5. clover. And then begin wheat &c. over again. By this means they would go into corn but once in five years. It would be still better to have four or five men for a twelve months to clear the whole body of your tenable lands at once, that you may at once come into the use of the whole, & allow more relief to the old, & an easier service to all of it in general, instead of wearing out one half while clearing the other by little & little as we have generally done in this neighborhood. I am going to have Short's all cleared in this way. But of all this there can be no better judge than Mr. Jones. I have divided my farms into seven fields on this rotation, 1. wheat. 2. peas & potatoes. 3. corn & potatoes. 4. peas & potatoes till I can get the vetch from Europe. 5. rye. 6. clover. 7. clover. My lands were so worn that they required this gentle treatment to

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recover them. Some of yours are as far gone. There are two or three objects which you should endeavour to enrich our country with. 1. the

Alpine strawberry. 2. The skylark. 3. The *red* legged Partridge. I despair too much of the nightingale to add that. We should associate Mrs. Monroe to you in these concerns. Present to her our most affectionate esteem, not forgetting Eliza. We are all well except Mr. Randolph, whose health is very frail indeed. It is the more discouraging as there seems to have been no founded conjecture what is the matter with him. Your brother is well, but Mrs. Monroe rather sickly. The death of Dr. Walker is the only event of that kind which has taken place in our neighborhood since you left us. Dr. Gilmer still lives. His eldest daughter is to be married to a Mr. Wirt the day after to-morrow. Frank Walker has succeeded to the whole of Dr. Walker's estate, said to be worth £20,000. Sam Carr married to a daughter of Overton Carr in Maryland & probably will remove there. His mother (my sister) living at his place a little above Dr. Gilmer's. My budget is out. Adieu. God Almighty bless you all.

P.S. If you can send us with Froulle's books a supply of 20. or 30 lb. of macaroni, they will be an agreeable addition to his bill.